

To Whom It May Concern:

Lifting restrictions on cross-ownership is an unconscionable act of government-sponsored monopolizing. It would put Americans at the mercy of a few corporate behemoths, their programming directors and advertisers-gobbling up media outlets. Opposition to this sort of consolidation is not simply the product of a visceral reaction. This is of serious concern to the public as viewers and readers, as consumers of information dependent upon its unfettered dissemination. And, in contrast to Mr. Powell's frequent assertions to the contrary, this is beyond the scope of market correction. Existing government policy already grants private broadcasters monopolies on frequencies the public owns; and cable companies are allowed, under the auspices of the FCC, to block out competitors. At a time when debate incessantly rages about media content, about the bias and motive of those who produce and dispense it--in particular, the impact on children; commitment to and representation of the poor and people of color; and the cozy relationship between corporations, their lobbyists and our lawmakers; you would place the power to reach people, shape public opinion and drive future policy, squarely in the hands of a few, profit-driven conglomerates. I have found many of Mr. Powell's comments about the FCC's responsibility to the public troubling, but I am also glad to read them while I still can.

-Paul T. Jones, III